

11 July 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Current Intelligence

SUBJECT : Is the Green Light Turning Orange?

1. The Washington Post and New York Times on 9 July featured a photograph of a group of children peering through a hole in the Berlin Wall. The hole was torn spontaneously on 8 July by some 300 West Berliners who had been outraged when East German border guards shot at three would-be escapees. On 9 July, a West Berliner was arrested by the East Germans, after crossing through Check-point Charlie and shouting "murderers" at the border guards. There is some good news and some bad news here. The good news is that there was not much blood spilled; the bad news is that the events occurred at all.

2. West Berliners, usually cynical and hardnosed, are uncharacteristically up tight. That is, in a sense, ironic; since the Quadripartite agreement on Berlin and the related inter-German accords, West Berliners have had greater opportunities for travel to East Berlin and the GDR than at any time since the Wall went up in 1961. Two factors appear to explain this. First, because conditions have improved, the remaining abnormalities in divided Berlin stand out even more starkly. In addition to escapees being shot down at the Wall, children are still drowning in sector border waterways because East German guards will not allow their rescue. Thus, individual incidents are capable of stimulating a greater degree of public

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outrage. Tensions in Berlin may increase in the near term, moreover, especially during the World Youth Festival the East Germans will host in East Berlin from 28 July to 5 August, during which the East Germans will apparently restrict travel into East Berlin by West Berliners.

3. The second factor appears to be the dashing of unrealistic expectations. The West German government went overboard last year, when it was fighting for ratification of its Ostpolitik treaties, in making claims for the possibilities these treaties opened up. Subsequent East German actions have demonstrated decisively that the situation in Berlin (and between the Germanies) will not be normal for many years to come--if ever. Add to this brew the high-sounding phrases of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the hope of troop reductions in MBFR, and you have all the ingredients for the classic political situation in which populations do unpredictable things out of a sense of betrayal.

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4. If the situation is charged in West Berlin, where we can observe it closely, one can only guess at what it is on the other side of the Wall.

the East Germans are decidedly disappointed over how little they personally have benefitted from detente. Large numbers are proscribed from seeing visiting West Germans and West Berliners, and travel to the West is still not allowed. Some of them are annoyed even by the Youth Festival, for which they have had to "volunteer" hours of unpaid labor. East Germans, moreover, are taking advantage of the even slightly more open border to raise exfiltration totals sharply, much to the displeasure of the masters. While what little evidence we have does not add up to the makings of a revolution, especially when the people are Germans, neither does it rule out incidents of public unrest.

- 2 -

25X1

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5. Another factor extant during previous East European crises, but missing in present day East Germany, is a publicly divided leadership. Nevertheless, something may be there. Party leader Honecker, for example, recently appeared to acquiesce in East Germans' watching West German TV, but then had an East German commentator suggest it was not a good idea. Foreign Minister Winzer continues to survive, even though his hard line public statements are quite out of keeping with East Germany's need to conform to Moscow's detente policies.

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6. Honecker's situation has to be very uncomfortable, serving as he must the contradictory demands of detente and domestic security. He must compete with the West Germans, who are finally a political power in Western Europe, and who have now cleared the boards for moving back into Eastern Europe. Honecker must not become isolated from his East European colleagues, but neither can he deep down approve of much that is going on. The Hungarians are complaining openly and loudly again about CEMA, and even the timid Bulgarians admit publicly that they are not happy with their role in CEMA integration plans; both are on the verge of establishing diplomatic relations with West Germany. Romania is using the era of detente to take a quantum leap on the road to independence (CSCE, MBFR, arms procurement) and, judging from Ceaucescu's visit last month to Bonn, looks to West Germany to help finance the expedition. Czechoslovakia, though it remains politically conservative, has settled its Munich treaty problem with West Germany, and will now be more susceptible to a West German economic influence with which East Germany cannot compete. Relations with Poland are a particularly delicate matter. On the one hand, it would be in Honecker's interest to integrate as completely as possible with Poland, to inhibit Warsaw from

- 3 -

25X1

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looking to Bonn for the magic formula to economic success. On the other hand, Honecker must take care that the more volatile Poles do not spill any future political problems across the border (Honecker will remember that the need to oust Gomulka almost certainly was a factor in the removal of Ulbricht). The Poles, who seem not to care whether a German is a Communist or not, apparently are playing the Germanies off against each other, as evidenced by Giersek's mid-June visit to Pankow and by the negotiations for a future visit by the Polish party leader to Bonn.

7. And then there are the Soviets. Inextricably committed to a detente policy toward the West, they obviously believe they can live with the greater diversity this necessarily produces in their own sphere of influence and with the lowering of barriers to the West. Whether or not Moscow is right, the East German regime cannot agree. But the East German leadership has no options. With 20 Soviet divisions on its territory, it can follow neither the Romanian nor Albanian paths. Primarily dependent on Soviet agreement for their jobs, these leaders can only muddle along.

8. On both sides of the Wall, therefore, we have societies under tension. The strains are apt to grow as detente progresses, as the gap between pretense and reality widens, and as local leaders fall further out of sympathy with the policies of their mentors in Bonn and Moscow. In such an atmosphere, two principal possibilities are enhanced. An individual can commit an essentially irrational act that more readily stimulates a resentful populace to even great insanities. The Hungarian revolution, it will be recalled, began when a security policeman lost his cool at the radio station and fired on a peaceful, if nasty, crowd. Secondly, political leaders can more easily misjudge their ability to control events. Is it unthinkable, for example, that an East German official might provoke a public incident to justify a firmer domestic line, and perhaps even to disrupt the detente process? Or how about a West German radical conservative?

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9. In sum, then, we have in the recent events at the Wall the early warning signals of perhaps far more portentous events. And this could prove true for a far wider area than Germany, for the Berliners may be only the first to become disillusioned about what detente means in personal terms. Are the hopes of the Poles or the Romanians any the less heart-felt?

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Chief, North European Branch, OCI

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- 5 -

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MEMORANDUM FOR: DDI

STAT

I attach some worthwhile ruminations from [redacted] about the kinds of problems which detente can cause for both Germanies. At the present the cloud is a little smaller than a man's hand, but you might want to pass it on for the DCI's reading.

STAT

[redacted]
DD/OCI

13 July 1973
(DATE)

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